REMARKS

Section A summarizes the status of the claims. Section B addresses the claim rejections.

A. Status of Claims

Claims 68-70 are pending in the application. Claims 68-70 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Johnson et al., US Patent No. 6,034,882.

B. Rejections, 35 USC 102(a): Claims 68-70

Claim 68 has been amended to recite a monolithic 3-dimensional memory array comprising: a first plane of memory cells; a first set of strips including a first terminal; a second set of strips including a second terminal; a third set of strips including a third terminal; a plurality of first pillars, each first pillar having at least one side wall with a slightly positive slope, each first pillar disposed between and connecting one of said first strips and one of said second strips, and including a first P doped silicon region, a first N doped silicon region and a first insulating region; a second plane of memory cells; a plurality of second pillars, each second pillar having at least one side wall with a slightly positive slope, each second pillar disposed between and connecting one of said second strips and one of said third strips, and including a second P doped silicon region, a second N doped silicon region and a second insulating region; wherein each of the pluralities of first and second pillars is substantially free of stringers, and wherein the first plane of memory cells includes the first pillars, the second plane of memory cells includes the second pillars, and all pillars included in memory cells in the first plane and the second plane of are free of stringers.

As described in the present application, a method of pillar formation like that described in Johnson et al. on occasion produced defects known as stringers, in which conductive material inadvertently left behind after an etch connected adjacent pillars, shorting them together. As those skilled in the art will understand, no fabrication method can produce an array guaranteed to be defect-free. As described at length in the present application, however, the method of the present invention, by performing back-to-back patterning steps, will prevent stringer formation. One skilled in the art would expect occasional stringer formation using the methods of Johnson et al.

Thus claim 68 and its dependent claims 69 and 70 distinguish over Johnson et al. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Applicants very much appreciate the assistance of Examiner Dickey and Supervisory Patent Examiner Nathan Flynn in navigating procedural complications and moving the present application toward resolution.

In view of these amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration is respectfully requested. **If any objections or rejections remain, Applicants respectfully request an interview to discuss the references.** If the Examiner has any questions, he is asked to contact the undersigned agent at (408) 869-2921.

If there are any questions concerning this Response, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned agent at (408) 869-2921.

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Respectfully submitted,

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